

From the cell of His Grace Bishop Youssef...

Reflections upon Quiet Meditations

> **“Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.”**

(Psalm 119:18)

Morale:

Quietness is Productive and Beneficial

As a young adult growing up in a heavily populated city with streets overflowing with people preoccupied with their daily life's activities, I would find myself in need of quietness; quietness that could slow down the fast pace of life whether it was school, more time needed for study and tests, or the noisiness of the streets below me. The church was often a place of retreat but I needed something to prepare me for worship, to prepare me for confession, and to prepare me for service. In order to benefit from life's activities rather than simply fulfill them I learned to seek quietness daily.

> **“It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. Let me sit alone and keep silent.”**

(Lamentations 3: 27-28)

Morale: Quietness should be a Retreat for Self-Examination

I needed quietness and time spent alone for self-examination to allow the Holy Spirit to search within myself for any deviation from Godly ways. Searching me for any confor-

mity to the world around me and exploring if I had strayed from any way of what I thought was acceptable to God helped to bring about the needed change I should make.

Knowing the reality of my self and my spirit required times of quietness in which I entered my room, closed its door, and sat quietly. The quietness may in the beginning simply be a void of noise and activity. But the more you train yourself to sit in quietness each day if for not more than ten minutes will help you to know the reality of your condition and help you maintain a calmer outlook upon life in general.

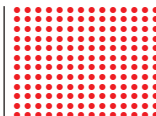
> **“And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.”** (Acts 24:16)

Morale: Correction of the Spirit is Essential in a Conforming World

Accepting one's mistakes is the only way to correct them. We need quiet minutes of time to know how weak we are, how bad our condition is, and how undeserving we are of the roles we are given in this earthly life. When you begin to realize how poor you really are, then quietly meditate upon Holy Scripture that can impact your life to become more conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Written by
His Grace Bishop
Youssef...





St. Peter said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8)

"My strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Corinthians 12:9)

"For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." (Romans 7:18)

"For when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Corinthians 12: 10)

Only when we realize our bad condition and regret it, are we worthy of God's grace. It is only in life in its quiet moments that we realize that knowing ourselves is the means to feeling close to God. Unless one is away from noise, away from the busy, preoccupied, multi-tasking world we cannot reach this realization. In quietness there is time to be contemplative of the day's actions, feel regret for a regression, seek God's mercy, and be sorrowful. The spirit when alone can cleanse itself and regroup.

> "Your Word is a Lamp to my feet and a Light to my Path." (Psalm 119: 105)

Morale: Meditation is the most Successful Method to Discipline oneself and positively Influence ones Personality.

Quietness and meditation enhance the voice of God in your life. It stops the wandering mind and the senses going astray with the things of this world. His Grace Bishop Youannis, the late bishop of Gharbia, often said that the quietness of retreat was the landing place for Holy inspiration.

For Elijah, the prophet, when he was alone he ate heavenly food. When he was among the people he often had to ask for food. Elijah ate better in seclusion than he did among the multitudes.

The unclean woman had spent all that she possessed on doctors and yet had become even sicker. But when she went quietly and secretly to touch the hem of the Lord Jesus Christ's garment, she was healed at once. (Matthew 9:20-22) Just as the woman quietly and unobserved except by the Lord was healed so would we find healing within quiet and purifying intentions.

St. Paul, one of the greatest and most influential missionaries of the church, following the Lord's appearance to him on the route to Damascus went to the Arabian Desert, east of Damascus where in the wilderness he spent as it is estimated, three years of quiet time with God and received from Him everything necessary for his life and for his mission of adding daily to the growth of the Holy Church. Although St. Paul was not among the disciples to physically see and follow the Lord Jesus Christ in his sought out quietness and meditations he knew God.

We know that St. John did not see the revelation until he was alone on the island of Patmos. There he dwelt in the spirit. (Revelation 1: 10)

> Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "When you pray, enter your room and close your door." (Matthew 6: 6)

Morale: the Lord Jesus Christ Thought Quietness was Necessary for Time Spent with God

Quiet times are essential for one's well being, one's prayers, and one's need to strive for a pure heart.

Ridding your heart and mind of all its worldly preoccupations, focusing on correction of one's sinful ways, learning self-discipline, and adding quietness to your daily life activities can lead you to trusting the calm voice of God.

Be quiet in a place without movement, a place that is empty without people where you can hear nothing but the silence. When your spirit becomes quiet, take time to listen to the quietness, take time to look inside yourself and begin to know yourself as you are and with critical and careful self inspection begin to know God. As long as you see others around you, you will not see you.

